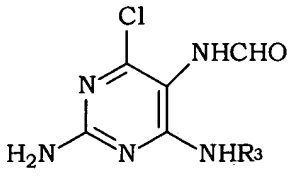
wherein R^3 is hydrogen; hydroxyl; a C_{3-7} carbocyclic group, optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; an acyclic group, wherein such acyclic groups may be optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; or a C_{4-7} heterocyclic group, wherein said C_{4-7} heterocyclic group has a one or more heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of a N, O and S atom and wherein such C_{4-7} heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, comprising reacting a compound of formula (VI)

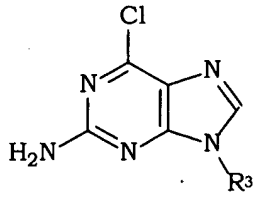


(VI)

wherein R^3 is as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

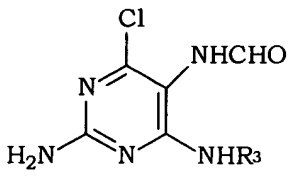
F2

18. (Amended Five Times) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

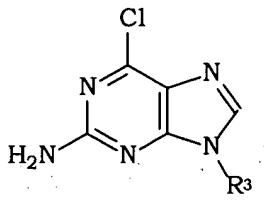
wherein R^3 is a C_{3-7} carbocyclic group, optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; an acyclic group, wherein such acyclic group may be optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; or a C_{4-7} heterocyclic group, wherein said C_{4-7} heterocyclic group has a one or more heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of a N, O and S atom and wherein such C_{4-7} heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, comprising reacting a compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

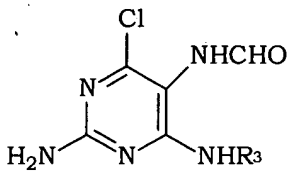
F2 wherein R^3 is as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

F3 22. (Twice Amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

wherein R^3 is an acyclic group, wherein such acyclic group may be optionally substituted with substituents selected from the group consisting of C_{1-4} alkyl, C_{1-4} alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, and halogen; provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, comprising reacting a compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

wherein R^3 is as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.